602 farm the land and use church pasturage in the valley, are often the sons of the brothers of the priest, if not his own sons--an Amhara form of nepotism.

417 231 Each hamlet is usually fenced in ("jägol"-thorny fence) against night-roving hyenas, and may contain, besides living huts and store huts, a cattle corral ("magwa") though at least the calves and the family mule are taken into the living hut at night. The kitchen garden may also have an enclosure of cut thornbushes, protection against ravages by domestic cattle; and ther usually is at least one fierce reddish-brown dog (with white underside). Solid fences of stakes fixed straight in the ground ("gärräggärä") are usually used only around churches.

●632 622 While the head of each hamlet is the head of the residential, extended family, the administrative head of a series of hamlets is appointed by the governor of the province (formerly by the feudal lord). This appointed headman, chəqa shum (lit. "appointed one over the soil") may administer as few as two hamlets, or as many as fifty, with the mode about 8 to 10. In sparsely populated, less fertile or very mountainous territory his domain may be greater, but in most cases his area is within sight so that he can even maintain contact during the rainy season. His area is properly called "mänder" and constitutes the nearest approach to the village concept. If his territory is on church land, it is referred to as "and debber agär" (lit. land in support of a certain holy place) since very often this land has been donated for that purpose in the last will of a pious elderly landowner, and is something like parish

632
622 land. When a person is asked where he is from, he will often give the local name for his "and debber agar" of origin.

634 The cheqa shum, village headmen, are supervised by the district chief, "worāda shum", who is also appointed by the
625 governor. The district chief in turn appoints his own police, called "nāch lābash" (lit. "thiefcathers in white"), who wear no special uniforms, merely the usual white togas, and carry rifles, in the use of which they are expert. They are used not only against petty thieves but against more dangerous bandits also. Their efficiency is commonly regarded as far superior to that of the uniformed urban police. Usually there is one nāch lābash per half-district ("makatl worāda") or two per district, unless an increase in banditry ("shifta") requires more.

651 Taxes, paid often in produce but increasingly in cash, are collected from each cheqa shum, but not by the district chief himself. For this task the governor has appointed a lieutenant, "mislanē", per district ("worāda"), who ranks equal with the worāda shum and expects aid from the latter. Usually the mislanē is a stranger to the district and himself a sort of glorified retainer and account-keeper from the court of the governor of the sub-province ("awraja") who has appointed him; while the district chief is a local man who may conspire with his village headmen to keep local prosperity from the knowledge of the governor's central office. The latter therefore has to rely on the cleverness of his lieutenants, the "mislanē".

622 651 The administrative pyramid rests squarely on the shoulders of the cheqa shum. He collects local dues for

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

875 grades, in the Amhara areas, sometimes also in the south.
871 Most elementary school teachers in the provincial capitals are East Indians, except that Amharic and Coptic religion are taught by Amhara. A graduate of an elementary school can take a job as a teacher himself and begin with a wage of Eth$125.-a month; or as a municipal clerk with about equal income, which places them in the upper income group. Even a graduate of the 5th grade can earn Eth$50.- as a clerk on the bottom rung of the "educated". Or he may secure a teaching job in a church school near his home, and then go to the court of the bishop and wait about ("daj tena") until the great man notices him and confirms him in his job.

871 In view of the high cash value of modern education, almost everyone wishes to enter, though fathers are still reluctant to part with the services of their sons, in cattle herding and harvest-watching, until the boys are 11 years old, so that graduates of elementary schools are frequently 19 years old. The elementary schools are still so few (though increasing) that only the sons of influential "great men" usually manage to be admitted. Secondary schools are available primarily in Addis Ababa, not in provincial Amhara capitals, and there nearly all the teachers are Europeans. Graduates of secondary schools become upper-level government officials.

464 The preference of Amhara individuals to hire on
632 only for temporary labor, if at all, finds its expression and variation in the market town. Here many events that bring variety into his fairly monotonous rural life,

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

464 632 happen and can be talked about. Here caravans arrive with all kinds of trade goods, and though the Amhara is not a trader in his culture pattern, he does hire on as transportation helper, and will have his own donkey carry some goods for sale.

443 There is a small daily market in each town. Where no town is near, one day a week a small rural market takes place (e.g. every Tuesday at Laqwamiya in the district of Seqelt) so that farmer and trader can meet Monday through Friday, at these markets set up at crossroads, in a grove of trees, or near a church center.

The big Saturday market takes place in a town terminal of caravan routes; nowadays at the end of an Italian road, also, e.g. at Golarba in Dembea, where Italian trente-quatro trucks carry imports and exports to Asmara, Eritrea, and the coast, while caravans carry goods from and to the Sudan. Gondar town is an older and bigger Saturday market. To these markets are brought surplus farm products. All routes lead to it, and the well-to-do ride there on mules, their servants beating out a road for them among pack donkeys and pedestrians. In return, Ethiopian retailers (often Muslim) sell goods bought from Arab wholesalers.

While there is some duplication of items of sale at these markets, the daily markets specialize in items used by or obtained from the household: fresh butter sold on a leaf, to put on the hair; melted butter for cooking in "wot"; red barbare pods of varying strength,

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

631 visors are in turn responsible to the governors of the sub-province, the "awraja gaj". It is customary that these officials be appointed from provincial nobility, of the lower grades, and this custom is still followed in the old-Amhara provinces, though not in Shoa where the central government has managed to place officers with modern elementary school education regardless of commoner origin.

[622 554] Even the çheqa shum, who is always a commoner--though owner of freehold "rest" land--has a claim to being regarded as a "telleq saw", a great man, in the local social sphere. For the higher officials and absentee landlords know that their administration and territorial organization are ultimately dependant on him, and they refrain from undermining his authority.

B. Urban Organization

632 The word for "town", "kätäma", really means "permanent camp", and points directly to its origin in the feudal social organization. When a feudal lord (high level, e.g. a "ras") became attached to one place, and was at peace for any length of time, he would order a large church to be built, creating or enlarging a church parish. Trails leading there would expand into caravan routes, and a large and varied "Saturday market" would develop. This would attract Muslim or even Arab wholesalers, who would be segregated or segregate themselves

632 not far from the market. A smaller daily market for retail items would develop, so commerce proceeded even on a daily basis. A larger church school, to include some higher grades, would be set up by priests and Däbtära (scribe-choristers).

632 712 On account of the floods in the rainy season, most of this town would be on a higher level, preferably a butte overlooking a river valley from which drinking water could be brought every day. On this fertile flood plain, just below the town, there would be some grass even at the gheight of the dry season, so that the cows owned by urban citizens would always find some pasture.

[423] On this floodplain a "commons" was set aside, which no

[425] one could "enclose" for private use. It was called "addäbabay" or even "yähezb addäbabay", and served as camping place for caravans, for temporary storage space of their goods and their mules, donkeys or camels, prior to the slow climb up the butte to the Saturday market. This arrangement also had the advantage of military security for the town, protecting it from sneak attack of an enemy under guise of a caravan, which was not permitted to proceed upward into town until dawn. For the Amhara town, unlike the Muslim towns in the south, were not walled.

632 651 This arrangement also permitted the "nägadras" the collector of duties for the central power of the province, to keep control of the merchandise entering and leaving the market.

632 Contact with feudal land tenure was maintained
566 by requiring the "gultenña" of the district to come to town every three months for a one-month statute labor, then called "wär tära", for the feudal lords now residing in town, if no war was in progress. Of course the actual labor was done largely by the "gabbar", but the gultenna was responsible. The domain of the feudal lord was called "gezat" (lit. acquisition, possession), and while this statute labor has now been abrogated, the term survives to mean "province".

632 The feudal chief of the province, imitating the
692 king, would "sit in judgment" in Solomonic grandeur, usually twice a week, under a broad, shade-giving sycamore, in front of his "palace". The latter could range from a spacious tent to a stone house of round design in the ancient style (or a Portuguese-type castle of the 17th century). Surrounded by courtiers and would-be courtiers, eager to proclaim the boundless wisdom of the lord, he would also appoint smaller judges, "danya", to hear more toutine cases brought in from the countryside by the cheqa shum officials. The town thus became a place where even thesimplest peasant could, at least theoretically, seek relief from excessive opression.

[625] The bodyguard of the lord of the town, commanded by a "shaläqa" (lit. chief over 1000 men), could detail his men for duty as "zebanya" watchmen, of specific spots, especially near the market, and this force thus formed a kind of city police.

000 Since the town attracted the most clever "däbtära",

632 Since the town attracted the most clever "däbtära",
[759] many of whom were herbologists, it was also a center where "medical aid", sometimes quite effective, could be obtained, and attracted patients from far and wide.

[463] Ethnic craftsmen would settle in hamlets within walking distance of the town, to provide iron tools, tanned leather, sun umbrellas, etc., without, however, exposing themselves to mockery, insults and occasional assaults by living in the town itself.

632 517 The town developed as a social center, and center for entertainment, almost inevitably. First, religious feasts such as the Epiphany parades and the tournaments on the public commons on "ganna" (Christmas) attracted the populace; and youngsters as well as adult loafers found themarket scenes fascinating. Secndly, the Arab traders liked to discuss business and news over tea or coffee. So "teahouses " (shay bet") sprang up near the Saturday market, serving snacks also to many a male at [265] odds with his wife, and excluding all womenfolk. Conversely, the mead house, ("tej bet") provided evening 632 648 588 entertainment with female singers and dancers (azmari) for the all-male clientele, and waitresses easily available for sexual entertainment. Moreover, every town had at least one "street of unattached women", who catered to travellers or visiting peasants as innkeepers, restaurateurs, and as temporary wives; they were usually divorcees, who hoped to find another husband, and to settle down again to regular married life.

632 178 Except for some of the feudal arrangements, most of this town pattern of social organization is still

632 little changed. Modern developments are merely superimposed on this pattern, mostly due to recent decrees [178] of the central government at Addis Ababa. This city 633 had itself grown out of a modest village on top of Entoto mountain in the 1880's, when Menelik II transferred it to the hilly floodplain just below because the population flocking to his court soon after his early military victories had caused a severe fuel and water shortage on the hilltop. The fondness of the empress for the hot volcanic springs at the somewhat lower water table were another reason for the transfer.

The old title of "kantiba", mayor, was given only to those of most important urban centers, notably Addis Ababa and Gondar, and this traditinn has also been maintained. Although the mayors are now supervised by a young, modern-educated "Director of Municipalities" located in the Ministry of Interior in Addis Ababa, who may visit them or call them in for conferences and instructions, the appointment to "kantiba" is still made directly by the emperor.

[625] The urban chief of police is still called "ahalăqa after the former title of the chief of bodyguard, and his subordinate officers are called "shambăl", the title used by Emperor Menelik II for the chief of his most select bodyguard("zebăña") of 300 men.

The kantiba can convene a traditional council of elders, called "chilot" (now often referred to as "commissions", after the Italian occupation), which includes the chief of police and top judges, to hear and discuss

133 the triangle of mountains bounded on the north by the Dessie–Debra Tabor
[491] road; on the west by the canyon of the Blue Nile; on the east by the Strada Imperiale; and on the south by the Debra Markos–Addis Ababa road. Here Ras Kassa's Shoan fief of Salale adjoins his territories in Amhara Saint.
[132] Salale is a great grassy upland, in May already swept by rain storms for six or eight hours a day. The road to Addis Ababa passes through Ras Kassa's
[361] capital of Fiche, which has the usual character of Abyssinian country towns:
[231] an agglomeration of huts standing in rather dreary eucalyptus groves and dominated by a fort and the European villa of the Ras. Salale has the reputation of being the best horse-raising country in Abyssinia.

175 Fiche has a certain strategic importance in the feudal politics of Abyssinia since it lies across the main line of communication between the capital and Gojjam; and in the period of *coup d'état* in the '20s the lord of Salale was always in the position to intervene suddenly in the capital only 70 miles away.

Ras Kassa has always maintained his loyalty to the Makonnen house. He is a magnificent old veteran of war and politics, rugged and erect in spite of his advanced years. Ras Kassa's two elder sons, who had come in to discuss a truce with the Italians some months after the fall of Addis Ababa in 1936, were executed under circumstances of abominable treachery. Nevertheless the old Ras made himself responsible for the escort of the Agibar prisoners over about 150 miles of country without a single one of them coming to any harm.

I was fortunate in June and July in spending some time in Dessie and in making my way up to the Debra Tabor district where, in mid-July, the
[103] Italian garrison of some six thousand men surrendered. Dessie, which means "my joy" in Amharic, is an ideal base from which to study the incomparably
[632] beautiful country round. The former capital of Ras Michael, the Moslem father of the ex-Emperor Lij Iyasu, Dessie became the northern military headquarters of the Empire during the years preceding the Italian conquest. Dessie was favourably situated in relation to the Italian frontier in southern Eritrea, but it owed its strategic importance to the inner political situation. To the east and north-east along the line of the Eastern Escarpment overlooking the Danakil Depression and the Red Sea basin is the country of the turbulent Wagara Gallas who were, and who remain, a recurrent threat to
[563] internal security. The Wagara clans in fact lie athwart the main south–north route from Addis Ababa to Aduwa and the new and hardly less important motor road down the Escarpment and across the Danakil desert to Assab. During the years 1929–31, each autumn after the Great Rains, the Emperor had not less than thirty thousand men in the field engaged in more or less fruitless marches and counter-marches over the highlands of the Wagara country.

Scarcely less formidable were the great conservative lords of the north:
[578] Ras Gugsa of Makale, who afterwards went over to the Italians; Ras Seyum of Tigrai, ruling all the country between the upper Takkaze and the Eritrean
[635] border; and Ras Gugsa Wolye of Debra Tabor, an ex-husband of the Empress Zawditu, who himself had pretensions to the throne and the support
[662] of the powerful centre of the Coptic priesthood in Aduwa.

The last great feudal campaign in Ethiopia took place in 1931. The Im-

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

perial Army, recruited largely from the non-Amharic southern region of Galla-Sidamo, advanced from Dessie and met the feudal levies of the pretender on the plateau of Debra Zebit. A great head-on encounter of over thirty thousand riflemen and spearmen took place along a front extending over 10 km. A lucky reconnaissance by the Emperor's two French Potez planes was probably the decisive episode in the battle. Somewhere in the mêlée Ras Gugsa Wolye was dragged from his mule and hacked to pieces. This last epic contest of feudal lords recalls one of the battles of the Wars of the Roses.

Dessie itself has something of the character of an alpine *Kurort*, and the Italians intended to develop it as such. When I was there the fairly numerous Italian colony was being removed to Asmara, and it was obvious that the town was gradually reverting to the untidy agglomeration of huts and shanties which is all the easy-going Ethiopian countryman requires in a town.

The surrounding grassy *alus* are the finest stock-raising country in Africa. Between the surrounding peaks of the uplands I have ridden for 3 or 4 miles over turf as flat as a race-course. I had the pleasant task of running a reception camp for surrendered Italian mules and ponies, and I was free to spend a good deal of time in the saddle under fresh wind-swept skies which recalled an English June.

The road from Dessie to Debra Tabor descends and ascends the canyon of the Bashilo and crosses the plateau of Debra Zebit. Magdala, the fortress capital of the Emperor Theodore, lies to the south-west, and the route from the Bashilo to Debra Zebit is the reverse of that taken by Napier in 1868, when he made his remarkable march up from the Red Sea. After Debra Zebit the route crosses the panhandle which forms the watershed between the Bashilo flowing to the Blue Nile and the northward-flowing Takkaze. Farther on towards Debra Tabor, with the incline down to the Lake Tana basin, the vegetation becomes richer. Snipe abound and are so tame that they could almost be killed with a stick.

In the mountains to the south-east of Debra Tabor is the curious anarchic community known as the Republic of Gaint, whose people claim to recognize no authority. The late Captain Pilkington and Captain McLean, who were organizing the tribes south and east of Lake Tana, managed to establish very friendly contact with the Gaint people.

Many hard things have been said about the Abyssinians. Some people have found it difficult to get on with them; but it is notable that foreigners who have spent some time with them are generally happy in their company. Under the name of Abyssinian, or of Ethiopian which they themselves prefer, are included people as varied as the Amhara and the Galla; the Hararene and the Tigraian; the Shoan and the Agau. It is worth giving an individual impression of these different groups.

The Amhara racial type includes both the Amhara and the Shoan, and, to a great extent also, the Gojjami. The Amhara are the dominant racial stock of the central Ethiopian Highland rather than the ruling caste of Ethiopia. There are plenty of poor Amhara villagers. The Amhara are described as of Hamitic origin; but from the earliest times there has been a strong infusion

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

PREFACE

121 This dissertation describes the medical beliefs and practices of an Amhara population of northwestern Ethio-
114 pia. The field research upon which it is based was con-
131 ducted from January to December, 1966, in the highland area of Begemder province that extends from Gorgora, on the northern shore of Lake Tana, to Debark, overlooking
101 the Takassie valley (see Map 3). This region is occupied
144 by four ethnic groups, the Amhara, Abyssinian Muslims,
197 Falasha (Abyssinian Jews), and Agaw (former pagans). All
131 are racially indistinguishable from one another, and speak a common language, Amharic. North of the Takassie River live the Tigre, a people closely related to the Amhara and, like the latter, Coptic Christians.

101 The Amhara, who are the most numerous of Begemder's peoples, also inhabit much of the highland plateau extending to the south, into Gojam and Shoa provinces, and to
231 the east, into Wollo province. Most Amhara are rural folk
241 who practice a mixed agricultural economy, gorwing grains
621 and pulses; raising sheep, goats, and cattle. The Amhara
• 632 countryside is divided into parishes. A parish is composed of several hamlets whose residents live on dispersed homesteads, and share important social and econo-
369 mic ties through their parish's church. In addition to these rural folk, Amhara constitute a majority among the townspeople of highland Begemder.

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
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townspeople of highland Begemder.

Field research was concentrated in the vicintiy of Gondar, the largest of the province's towns, and imperial capital during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Today, it is the provincial capital and an important ecclesiastical center, housing several famous churches and reknowned ecclesiastical academies. The town is also the home of many of the province's most famous healers. Extended research was also conducted in the Woggera region north of Gondar, in the rural hamlets discussed in Chapter Three. The division of research efforts between town and countryside reflects the important urban and rural aspects of Amhara medical practices with regard to the distribution of practitioners.

Through observation and inquiry, this field research sought, first, to elicit a description of the social and natural environments in which Amhara perceive pathogenic, prophylactic, diagnostic, and therapeutic forces to operate. A second concern was to examine how Amhara select elements from these environments, and arrange them into etiologies with which to explain particular disease episodes. On the one hand, this meant collecting abstract, conscious etiological models used by Amhara; on the other hand, it meant recognizing etiologies that are constructed pragmatically and piecemeal, in the course of prophylactic and therapeutic failures and successes. Fi-

Parish and Hamlet. The highland zones can be divided along three complementary social dimensions---political, ecclesiastical, and economic. Politically, the province is divided into awraja (sub-province), warada (district of a sub-province), and meketel warada (sub-district). The meketel warada consists of fifteen to thirty parishes (deber). The parish, in turn, is composed of three to ten hamlets (mender), each consisting of ten to fifty households (bet). Most households consist of husband, wife, unmarried sons, and pre-pubscent daughters[11]; a minority of households consist of aged spouses only, or of widowed individuals living by themselves. Characteristically, the households of a hamlet are dispersed, so that any one is perhaps 100 to 300 meters from its closest neighbors.

While officials of the provincial and sub-provincial governments are generally out-landers appointed by the central government, administrators of the warada and meketel warada are usually members of the local gentry. Within the parish, civil administration is in the hands of the ceka Sum, a petty administrator who imple-

[582] [591] 11 Since it is common for a girl to marry at 11 or 12, but to delay the virilocal move until age 15 or 16, the natal household may include a married daughter.

*793 capital) and the parishes. The social identity of the
*793 parish tends to be defined in terms of the ties linking
794 its residents to the parish church. The church must be provided with sufficient clergy for the performance of the weekly Mass, as well as Masses on feast days and on occasions which mark a sacrament of the Church. This amounts to perhaps three Masses every week, each of which must be conducted by at least two priests (kəyş) and three deacons (diyakon). Ideally, these ecclesiastics are recruited from among the parish's ristəñas, in return for the use of fields belonging to the parish church.
[776] The tie between residents of a parish and its eponymous church is further strengthened by the tendency of these people to confine their public ritual performances to the church, to favor the church's saint (reified in the arc, tabot) with private appeals for protection against illness and other misfortunes, to donate gifts to it when such appeals have been answered, to bury their dead in its churchyard, to pay towards the salary of a church teacher (astəmariy) of the syllabary, and perhaps for a teacher (məmhər) of advanced Church subjects as well, and, lastly, to contribute in tithes (generally cereals and other foodstuffs) and labor towards the proper maintenance of the church.

443 Parish and Town. The highland zones can be conceptualized as a series of overlapping market spheres, each
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12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

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632 centered in a town and extending outward to include those areas from which peasants come to buy and sell.
[132] The size of the town's sphere contracts and expands sea-
[484] sonally, reaching its nadir furing the rainy season, when overland travel becomes difficult owning to deep mud and raging torrents. Then, travelling is infrequent and confined to the market town closest to a peasant's home parish. Although market trips are more frequent during the remainder of the year, most terminate at the closest market. These relatively short trips are favored when grain is brought to the mills located on the periphery
[796] of most market sites. The spheres of the larger towns (Gondar, Debre Tabor, Dabat) reach maximum size on the market days which preceed the great celebrations of the Coptic Church---Meskal (which celebrates the discovery of the True Cross, and follows the end of the rains), Michaelmas (November), Timkat (feast of the Epiphany, and preceeding the Lenten fast), and Easter. Map 3 indicates the extreme limits for market spheres of the towns of the Begemder highlands.

[491] The highland market towns are strung along the province's only all-weather motor road.[14] Each offers a

[648] [14]This road, built during the Italian occupation (1936-1941), runs north to Asmara (capital of Eritrea) and (since the 1960's) south to Addis Ababa (the national capital). A dry season road links the highland towns to Metemma on the Sudan border.

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
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632 once-weekly market, staggered, so that the market days of over-lapping spheres do not coincide. Peasant exchange at these markets tend to be "sectional" in character; that is to say, producer-sellers bring regional specialties (such as cotton and high quality cayenne from kola lands; cereals, fresh vegetables, and livestock from highland farms), or occupational specialties (such as Falasha iron mongery and pots; the leather goods of the Fakiy, a largely endogamous artisan group). In addition to local products, peasants come to purchase imported goods (especially clothing) and the produce of distant parts of the Empire (such as salt bars from the Danakil Depression). The market is also the peasant's tie to the world market, to which he sends cattle and cattle hides.

The large market towns, with their numerous consumer crowds, offer important economic inducements to
[275] the peasant marketeer. Beyond these economic functions,
[548] the large town offers diversions and attractions unavailable in the peasant's home parish---exotic surroundings, the temporary fellowship and entertainment of bear houses and mead halls, and the sexual companionship of the town's numerous prostitutes.

632 The town also attracts peasant visitors on matters
796 unrelated to the market place. The monthly feast days of various saints of the Coptic Church are occasions for special celebrations, and these attract peasants, out of

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

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[346]
motives of piety and supplication, to the saints' eponymic churches. Within the environs of Gondar, for example, there are forty-two churches, and perhaps half are of sufficient antiquity and fame to mark them for special visits on the saints' days. Each of the market towns contains at least one famous church. The larger towns are, moreover, the seats of their sub-provinces, and are the objects of visits by peasants on "government" (mongist) business. Most frequently, this means
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[423]
litigation involving the disposition of land rights.

361 Two Rural Hamlets. Tikurmidir and Lemmariet are neighboring hamlets, situated on fertile dega lands. Together they occupy the southwest quadrant of Kidus Yowhannis parish (hamlet and parish names are pseudonyms), a three hour walk from the awraja seat, Dabat town, in the Woggera region. Of the two, Tikurmidir is larger:

[161]
[592]

	Tikurmidir	Lemmariet
Total population	151	95
Total households	36	24

In both hamlets, a majority of households are headed by
[613]
[592]
[162]
risteñas. These households are distributed among the hamlets' ambilineages as follows:

	Tikurmidir	Lemmariet
Ambilineage I	18	10
Ambilineage II	6	1

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

the memeleša counters the effect of the poison, which stands in the place that the primary medicine would in any other internally administered herbalist therapy.

The remaining therapy attracting clients from beyond the hamlet is Nikersa:kitabiy:A:I, and is the hamlet's best example of a therapy of medhaniyt awakiy grade. As an "amulet therapy", it has no memeleša, nor does it allow for a diagnosis to the administration of the therapy. The grading of such therapies is dependent upon criteria of efficacity and professional reputation; this nikersa therapy is regarded as relatively effective and it attracts clients from all Woggera, in spite of the presence of redundant therapies within this area.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF SECULAR HEALERS IN URBAN BEGEMDER

Less than 5% of the province's people are classified "urban" by Government census.[16] Half of these townfolk live in Gondar, the provincial capital. Although Gondar is the administrative, ecclesiastical, and commercial center of Begemder, its demographic and social character-

[16] 56,000 out of a total of 1.24 million (EAS1965: 23-24).

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

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632 istics are, except for differences in scale, approximated by most of the other provincial towns situated in predominantly Amhara areas.[17]

632 The People of the Town. Approximately three-
463 quarters of Gondar's residents are Amhara, born in either Begemder or adjacent Gojam provinces. Most Amhara townsmen are government employees (clerks, messengers, teachers, and judicial functionaries); a lesser number enjoy some ecclesiastical identity, and others are local rentiers, often supplementing their incomes with government or Church employment. A smaller number work in miscellaneous, unskilled occupations, notably as watchmen (zibaña) at the households of affluent co-religionists.

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632 Three quarters of Gondar's adult Amhara are women.
463 A minority of them are the spouses or dependents of lo-
433 cal Amhara townsmen, and confine their daily activities to domestic duties. A still smaller number are rentiers, or the recipients of stipends from mature sons living elsewhere. The remaining Amhara townswomen, perhaps 40%

[17] Thus excluding Chilga (urban center for the Kemant Agaw region) and Metemma (a border town of the Sudanese lowlands).

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

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632 of the town's total population, support themselves by
433 working among the densely packed rows of beer houses
463 and mead halls which are found along the approaches to, and in the vicinity of, the arada, the weekly market area. A portion of these women alternate periods of beer selling with work as servants in Amhara households.

632 Gondar's Muslims include both Abyssinians (pejora-
779 tively, "Jabartiy", "half-caste") and Arabs. While the
563 former are mono-lingual Amharic speakers and physically
[197] indistinguishable from Amhara, the latter are distinc-
[152] tively dressed, bilingual in Amharic and Arabic, often
[142] light-skinned, and either immigrants from South Arabia or the descendants of immigrants and their Abyssinian
[443] wives. Arab men are the town's most affluent merchants
[442] (who often make a weekly circuit of provincial markets with their goods), shop-keepers, and wholesalers. Arab women are secluded at home. In the main, Gondar's Muslims are residentially nucleated in Addis Allem, a settlement on the town's southern perimeter and contiguous to the arada.

632 A substantial number of Tigrinya-speaking people,
563 predominantly Eritrean, live in Gondar. The men are
463 employed mainly as artisans (carpenters, masons, sandal
[197] makers, tailors, tinkers), laborers, and ecclesiastics.
[562] Because of their relative sophistication, Eritrean women are popular servants for affluent townsmen, and as

bar maids.

A third, numerically significant minority have come from the provinces of Wollo to the east, and from Shoa and those areas still farther south. Local Amhara classify them together pejoratively as "Galla"[10], even though many are in fact true Amhara. Although these "Galla" vary as to physical type, most are indistinguishable from local Amhara, and only a minority are markedly negroid. Most are Copts or Muslims, although a few are non-Coptic Christians. Most of the men are government employees, generally members of the provincial gendarmerie, which is headquartered in Gondar.

Three additional, numerically small, populations also reside in Gondar. The Agaw are represented mainly by girls and women working as servants for the less affluent townsfolk, and as beer sellers. Of the Kilotes living here, the women work as servants for poor townsfolk, and both sexes haul wood from distant areas for sale in the town's daily wood market (sir gabiya). The very few Falasha in Gondar are iron-mongers.

Ward and Town. Gondar's residents divide the town

[10]The predominant ethnic group of southern Ethiopia, and, to Gondari Amhara, half-pagan and negroid ("bariya").

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621 into sixty-five named wards (sebekas). The social and demographic character of wards varies considerably, and it is useful to describe them in terms of two contrasting types. At one extreme, the ward resembles a kind
[241] of urban parish. It contains an eponymous Church; and
[423] a majority of residents are risteñas, members of land-owning ambilineages who support themselves by farming and renting homesteads on their lands. But even these wards contrast with rural parishes on several counts.
[492] The ward is generally compact in size, and internally
[463] undivided beyond the homestead (bet). Within it live out-landers who work outside the ward in exclusively non-agricultural occupations. Further, while the parish is administered in detail by residents, the ward relies upon non-resident agents of the municipality for its administration.

At the other extreme, are the town's "non-corporate"
[648] wards. During the Italian occupation, several of
[175] Gondar's parish-like wards were sequestered by the invaders as building sites. After liberation, the Imperial government divided each of these wards into tracts, which were deliniated according to the buildings upon them. Tracts were then given as grants (yaribeña mariet, "hero's land") to supporters of the government-in-exile, who were often non-residents of Gondar. In time, the pre-war boundaries of such wards were no longer regarded

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
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relevant by townsfolk, and tracts, alone or in combination, came to be redesignated as "ward". Typically, the non-corporate wards encompass no agricultural lands, and includes no church within its boundaries. None of its resident families are ristenas or even related to one another, and each tends to associate itself with a church [779] according to cirteria other than residence. Indeed, in some, Muslims occupy homesteads within an otherwise Christian ward.

Most of Gondar's wards are today without any corporate identity, and serve simply as convenient place names or as occasional indicators of affluence and occupation. Although the meaning of many ward names is forgotten now, the names of others remain appropriately descriptive. Some denote the residents' occupation; [192] (the "place of the superior beer", "encoye mosk", which is occupied by beer houses). Others retain the name of an eponymic church (as in Rufael sebeka).

Non-corporate wards are not a recent innovation. From its founding in the seventeenth century, Gondar has included such sebekas---given over to beer houses and mead halls, to liegemen and warriors, and to a variety of artisans. The last war and its aftermath have only extended such areas and have encouraged ristenas to build residences on their lands for out-landers unable to find housing elsewhere in town.

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• 632
621 A Gondar Ward. Gabrael sebeka lies on Gondar's eastern flank, and is typical of those wards which are not given over entirely to talla sellers or tradesmen. [241] Until liberation, it was occupied by ristenas and cul- [423] tivators of timene and church lands (riym). During the [198] last three decades, the ward's character changed greatly, [795] as domiciles for out-landers were built on its fields, [342] and many of its erstwhile peasants took up employment in [463] the town. Today, the ward contains 198 residents. Ten [161] of its forty-four households are headed by Gondar-born 632 people; of these, five were born in Gabrael sebeka it- 621 self. The remaining household heads are a) Amhara from 592 other parts of Begemder (sixteen households), from Gojam (five households), and from Wollo (five households); b) Tigreans (three households); c) local Agaw (two households); d) Shoans (four households); and e) Sankella (one household). On the average, the ward's adult residents who were not born in Gondar have lived fifteen [241] years in this sebeka. With the exception of three house- [793] holds which still depend exclusively on farming, and [463] two local priests (sharing the Mass with priests residing in an adjacent ward), the ward's residents are supported by occupations which depend upon daily contact with [463] people of many other sebekas. In brief, seven household heads are policemen, thirteen hold other government employment, five work as zibanas, eight as wood cutters,

two as talla sellers, and one each as mat seller, carpenter, day laborer, and pensioner.

The practice of herbalist therapies in ward and town contrasts significantly with the situation in rural hamlet and parish. The relatively dense population of the town has important consequences. In the countryside, the closest herbalist needed for a specific episode may be a day's walk from the client's home; in the town several may be found within an hour's walk. The increase in herbalist therapies is not directly proportional to the increased population of town over countryside, however. In Gabrael sebeka, for example, only eighteen households (41% of the total) contain one or more herbalists. Many townfolk are forced to abstain from practicing herbalist therapies, because, as out-landers, they are unable or disinclined to locate needed botanicals. Also, significant numbers of townsfolk practice non-secular therapies, particularly as balazars.

Further, although there are more redundant herbalist therapies potentially available to the townsman, he remains ignorant of many of them. The peasant locates himself within a network of several core kinsmen and neighbors upon whom he depends for information regarding herbalist chains. The townsman finds his place in a social matrix in which kinship ties are greatly diluted by distance. In Gabrael sebeka, for example, thirty-two house-

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holds (73% of the total) are without kinship ties to any other of the ward's households. Although many of these residents have kinsmen in other parts of Gondar, few have more than one or two relatives in the town. In addition, because most townfolk rely upon non-agricultural employment for their subsistence needs, there is a concomitant disinterest in ambilineage fields. A consequence is a weakening of the important economic bonds which otherwise link kinsmen to one another.

Kinship ties are an important means by which the peasant acquires and communicates information necessary for constructing herbalist chains. Since almost every herbalist therapy of the rural parish enjoys its own "pedigree", or trans-generational reputation, the peasant herbalist is provided with means for 1) publicly validating his therapeutic claims, and 2) communicating the existence of the therapy to his potential clients. Potential clients frequently associate the ownership of a famous herbalist therapy with the members of a specific ambilineage, often identifiable by name. Both the ambilineage (whose identity is linked to its fields) and its medical reputation (which is tied to the ambilineage) are attached to a particular location. Since residence is most often viripatrilocal, the transmission of such therapeutic reputations is characterized by an agnatic bias. The male therapist moving to town, like

known as kusil and ibac. In addition, Western therapy is sought for ailments which are serious and chronic, but for which traditional cures offer a poor prognosis or only palliatives. For these ailments (in particular, leprosy, kumtina; chronic coughing, yisaal basiyta, including tuberculosis, yilib basiyta; and a variety of stomach ailments, yihod himem and migaña), Western medicine is believed to offer prognosis equal to that of powerful traditional non-secular therapies, but not necessarily superior to them.

The injectionist's therapy is considered a variety of Western medicine. Injections are provided in the town's single pharmacia and by a handful of free-lance injectionists. All offer the same therapy, injection with what the client believes to be a uniform medicament, generally unidentifiable beyond "merify".[19] Injectionist therapy is favored for primary syphilis (kitin) and "fevers" (weba).

The town herbalist's foremost traditional competitors are the weak debtera and the balazar. The relative concentration of these therapists in towns is indicated by the following: In Tikurmidir and Lemmariet, there

[19] Most often, it is penicillin.

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*278 *969 • 632 are no debtera therapists, and, although there are several women who are members of zar coteries (and are, thus, balazar) none publicly practiced therapies which might have been obtained from zars or fellow balazars. In contrast, the following non-secular therapies are practiced in Gabrael sebeka:

	Non-secular therapies	Herbalist therapies
Balazar 1	7	
Balazar 2	7	
Balazar 3	8	
Debtera 1	6	
Debtera 2[20]	10	
Total	40	31
% of all therapies of Gabrael sebeka	56%	44%

*278 *969 369 In summary, then, herbalists figure less prominantly in the town than in the countryside. The townsman more frequently omits them from relevant practitioner chains, or limits them to the initial consultation in such chains. 369 95 However, from the perspective of the system of Amhara medical beliefs, this contrast between town and country

[20] In ecclesiastical terms, this man is not entitled to the title of "debtera".